

Shut Up and Hug Me by orphan_account

Series: [Hey... \[3\]](#)

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Angst, Comfort, F/M, Fluff, He is literally the best boyfriend ever, insecure Max, the Sinclairs are clearly the best comforters ever, wonderful Lucas

Language: English

Characters: Billy Hargrove, Dustin Henderson, Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield

Relationships: Maxine (Max) Mayfield/Lucas Sinclair

Status: Completed

Published: 2018-01-31

Updated: 2018-01-31

Packaged: 2022-04-20 16:34:42

Rating: General Audiences

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 1

Words: 2,686

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

Lucas doesn't know what's up with Max, but he'll stop at nothing to make her feel better.

Shut Up and Hug Me

Author's Note:

Oof. I wrote this in a hurry, and it fell flat. Woops.
In spite of its many flaws, I hope you enjoy!

“Hey,” Lucas greets Max, falling into step beside her. “What’s up?”
She shrugs.

“Not much. Why do you ask?”

Lucas feels himself frowning involuntarily. It’s not like her to be so abrupt. Sure, she’s not usually *super chatty*, but *there’s something in her tone that makes him uneasy*. It’s not like she’s bouncy or super full of excitement or anything, but she is always pleased to see him, no matter what – not to mention her constant supply of sarcasm and wisecracks. None of which were in her words today.

And maybe he’s a clingy boyfriend, maybe he’s too concerned, but it doesn’t seem right.

“Are you okay?” he asks, trying to meet her eyes.

She gives him a strange look.

“I’m fine. Are you? You’re acting weird.”

“I’m acting weird?” he repeats, completely befuddled. “You’re the one that was snappy when all I did was say hi.”

“Snappy?” she echoes, sounding offended, and Lucas curses silently for his apparent inability to be a good boyfriend.

“I’m just saying that you don’t seem fine,” he says soothingly.

“Maybe I would be if you’d just give me some breathing space,” she snaps. Lucas actually stops in the middle of the hallway, stunned. Max is always mouthy, but she’s never implied that she resents his company.

“Oh,” he says, aware that it sounds lamer than lame and also completely unable to come up with anything else. “Okay.”

She’ll stop, right? She’ll stop and apologize, tell him that she’s just feeling lousy or she’s had a bad day or something, and he’ll tell her that it’s fine, and they’ll make plans to watch *Ghostbusters* after school to cheer her up, because she secretly loves it.

Max keeps walking.

Lucas feels like he’s been kicked in the gut.

The rest of the day is kind of blurry. He can’t focus on anything, and

Dustin has to kick him under his desk for him to realize that Ms. Vernon called his name. He all but suffers through Biology, his favorite class of the day, and when the bell finally rings he bolts to Max's locker. She's not there, which is fine. He can wait, and he does. He waits for two minutes, which turn into five, which turn into ten, and she doesn't come. He panics.

What did he do to make her so mad? He racks his mind for any transgressions he may have made, but he can't think of a single one, which worries him greatly. If he's messed up badly enough to make her this upset, clearly that's a big deal, and the fact that he hasn't got the first clue as to what he's done is genuinely terrifying.

He can't stand having her mad at him. He hasn't been able to since he met her. Irritated, sure. Exasperated, fine. Upset? That's a big, big no.

So he sits at her locker and panics and tries to think of something, anything, that he can do to make her not mad at him. He comes up with a thousand and one ideas, none of which are practical.

"What are you doing?"

Lucas jumps at Dustin's voice. Maybe he shouldn't get so absorbed in his thoughts.

"Uh, nothing."

Dustin is less than convinced.

"Right. You're sitting next to Max's locker and muttering to yourself like a psychopath because there's nothing going on."

Lucas shrugs sheepishly, suddenly becoming aware of all the odd looks being sent his way.

"Come on," Dustin says, offering a hand. "It's my job to make sure you don't look like even more of a nerd than you do already."

Lucas scoffs as he accepts the help up.

"Because you know so much about not looking like a nerd."

"Excuse me?" Dustin says, affronted. "I've been spending time with the one and only Steve Harrington. I know a lot more about not looking like a nerd than the rest of you losers do."

"Whatever you say," Lucas says magnanimously.

Dustin offers to listen to whatever's bothering him, but Lucas tells him that it's probably best if he just deals with it on his own – which is true, because even though Dustin is over Max it's still a slightly sore topic, and Lucas doesn't want to rub his face in it. So they part ways at Dustin's mailbox, and Lucas keeps pedaling towards Max's house.

Sure, her family doesn't like him, but she doesn't like him much right now,

either, so it doesn't really matter.

He parks his bike by the curb, straightens his jacket, sets his backpack by his bike, and marches up the sidewalk. He has a moment of terrified paralyzation, and then he rings the bell.

The Michael Jackson song that was blaring abruptly cuts off, and heavy footsteps stomp over to the door. Lucas feels his heart hammering in his throat; he knows whose those footsteps are.

The door jerks open, and Lucas jumps.

"What'dya want?" Billy glares at him suspiciously.

"I... um..."

For some reason, after being slammed into a cabinet Lucas is slightly nervous around Max's stepbrother.

"Hurry up, moron," Billy snarls. "I don't have all day."

"Uh, Max," Lucas says. "Do you know where she is?"

Billy scoffs.

"No, and if I did, it's none of your business. She can do whatever she wants without being chased by some creepy little –"

"Bye," Lucas says, because he doesn't feel like being put down when he's so worried about Max.

Billy threatens to kill him, threatens lots of different things, but he ignores them, because now he's even more worried about his girlfriend.

He wonders if she's even that anymore, and he feels a stinging behind his eyes and he hates himself for being so pathetic but it's beyond his control. He's worried and panicked and doesn't know what to do and he just wants to hold Max's hand, to tell her that it's all going to be okay, to apologize for whatever it is he did to make her so upset.

But he doesn't know where she is, and for all he knows she could have been kidnapped or mugged or any number of unsavory things, and he stops his bike and sits down on the curb and thinks as hard as he can about where Max could be.

She didn't come to her locker. He didn't see her leave the school. Did she...?

It's worth a try.

There are only a few vehicles left in the school parking lot when Lucas bikes in. He's assuming they're all teachers doing overtime.

Thankfully, the doors are still unlocked, and he dashes through them with his heart in his throat. He has a feeling.

He walks past her locker, past the classrooms, to the girl's washroom.

Once he's outside of them, he takes a deep breath and steels himself for

what he's about to do. He's never, in all his fourteen years, gone inside a girl's bathroom, not even by accident. He has a brief internal struggle about what this will do to his masculinity, but it doesn't last long, because Max is more than worth any sacrifice he could possibly make.

So he closes his eyes and tells himself it's for her and enters the room.

It's much the same as the guys' – graffiti on the stalls, a faulty faucet dripping steadily into one of the sinks – except for the sobbing echoing off of the white tiled walls.

He recognizes the voice instantly, and his heart drops into his shoes.

"Max?" he says softly. The crying immediately stops.

"Lucas?" she asks uncertainly. "What are you doing here?"

The tears that lace her words are like an arrow through his chest, worse even than that time he got shot in D&D.

"What's wrong?" he asks her.

"I'm fine," she says, sniffing.

Lucas shakes his head.

"Maybe so, but you're not okay," he says. "I really want to help."

"It's nothing," Max insists, but he can hear that she's weakening and he presses his advantage.

"Please talk to me. Please. I'm your..." Even after a month, he loves using the word. "Boyfriend. I'm your boyfriend, Max, and it's my job to make you feel better. Please tell me what's wrong."

A pause, and then she starts sobbing even harder than before. Lucas is horrified.

"I'm sorry!" he blurts. "I'm so sorry, I don't want to hurt you, I don't know what I did wrong, please tell me so I can fix it."

The only response to his run-on sentence is even harsher crying. Before he even knows what he's doing, Lucas is down on the floor and slithering under the door of the stall in which he can see her dusty white sneakers.

The arrow in his heart gets shoved in a little further when he sees her. She's clearly been crying for a while – her face is red and her eyes are swollen and when she speaks her voice is scratchy.

"I look horrible, I know."

"Max," he says, but she keeps talking.

"I don't... sorry. I'm pathetic. I never used to cry this much. It's all your fault."

"I'm sorry!" he says, and he means it with all his heart. "I swear, Max, I never meant to make you cry. I don't know what I did, but I'm really sorry. Please don't cry because of me."

She stares at him.

"You're an idiot, Stalker," she says after a minute, and it's only then that he realizes she called him Lucas earlier. For some reason, the fact that she used his given name when she was most upset sends some warm thrill shooting through him, but he feels guilty about feeling that way when she's clearly not okay.

"Sorry," he says again, and she rolls her eyes.

"You don't need to be sorry," she says. "It's not really your fault. It's just... I had a meltdown a couple weeks ago, and I had one today, and it's so not like me." She shrugs. "Sorry."

"You don't need to be sorry either!" he says hastily. "You haven't done anything wrong!"

"Thanks," Max says half-heartedly, keeping her eyes fixed on a spot over his left shoulder.

"Anytime," Lucas says sincerely, and then there's a minute where neither of them say anything and both of them feel like idiots. "So," he ventures, when she's stopped hiccupping every few seconds and he's had ample time to reflect on how crowded a handicapped stall can feel when there are two people in it, "are you going to tell me what's up?"

"Life," Max shrugs.

"Home?" Lucas guesses, and Max shakes her head.

"No," she says. Lucas is bewildered.

"Then what?"

If he didn't do something, did Dustin? Did Mike? He can't see Will being offensive. Was El a little snippy?

She stares at her hands, which she's twisting in her lap as she chews on her lip.

"It's dumb," she says.

"Tell me," he all but begs. "Please."

"Yeesh," she huffs a chuckle, "Don't get your undies in a twist."

"I'm just worried," he tells her. "I just want to know what's wrong so I can fix it. I hate seeing you unhappy."

She looks touched by this, more touched by this than she usually is, and Lucas prides himself on finally saying something right today.

"You're sweet, Stalker," she says, "but you can't fix this."

"What's wrong?" he asks, tired of the back and forth.

She seems to pick up on this, because she buries her face in her hands and mumbles, "I'm just a really lame person."

He stares at her, bewildered.

"A really lame person?" he repeats, totally confused. "What the heck are you talking about?"

"Come on," Max says, "don't tell me you haven't thought about it."

"I haven't," Lucas says truthfully. He was too busy thinking about how pretty she was and how fun she was to be around and how much he loved her... hair. Loved her hair.

"I just..." she shakes her head. "I don't know. I guess... Stacey and the others were talking during gym, and it kind of threw me a bit."

"What did they say?" Lucas asks, relieved that they're finally getting somewhere. Max's face darkens, and he suddenly wishes that he hadn't asked. "You don't have to say if you don't want to," he adds.

"Just... stuff," she says vaguely. "Like... how I'm messed up, because the only person that'll date me is a... you know. And, I don't know... how I might be pretty if I were to try makeup and clothes that fit and, you know, stuff. I don't know. It's dumb."

Lucas's brain temporarily stops working. What were they even thinking? His blood starts boiling. He's never heard anything more – what were they – he can't think straight, he's so upset.

Max takes his silence for agreement and stands up from where she's been sitting on the toilet seat.

"Yeah, that's what I thought. I didn't realize that kind of stuff meant anything to you."

"What are you talking about?" he asks. "It doesn't!"

"What?"

"What?"

They look at each other, both confused and both upset, until Lucas decides to take matters into his own hands.

"Max," he says, looking her in the eyes and reflecting that his favorite color wasn't blue until he met her, "those girls are imbeciles." She huffs a laugh, and he shakes his head. "I mean it!" he insists. "Nothing they said was true."

"Okay," she says, but he can tell she's not convinced so he shakes his head.

"No, it's not okay," he informs her. "You need to know that you're the most amazing person I've ever met."

"Whatever," she says, and he shakes his head again, more violently this time.

"You don't get it, do you?"

"Oh, boy," she says. "I know where this is going. I don't need a sickeningly sweet speech, Stalker. I'm good."

"But I need you to know," he says, "that you're, like, the most awesome person ever."

"Sure," she says.

He feels himself getting annoyed by her constant disbelief, so he decides the best course of action is to talk so quickly that she doesn't have an opportunity to get a word in edgewise.

"Look," he says. "You're not 'messed up.' They were talking about me. The only problem with you is that you're dumb enough to date me."

"That's not – "

He doesn't let her finish.

"And no, you're not pretty – you're gorgeous. Your hair, and your eyes... You don't even know, Max. They're just jealous that you look better right after you roll out of bed than they do after half an hour of plastering makeup on their faces."

Her eyes shimmer with tears, and he worries that he's overstepped something until she lets out a breathless laugh as she wipes her eyes.

"Darn it, Lucas. This is exactly why I didn't want you to give me a speech."

"Sorry," he starts. She doesn't let him finish.

"Shut up and hug me."

He feels a rush of relief and happiness and something that he's not ready to recognize but which he's fully aware is love, and he finally puts his arms around her and holds her as tightly as he can.

She gives a happy little hum and nestles into his chest. She's warm and solid and he's been wanting to hug her all day and he rests his cheek against the top of her head and thinks that life couldn't really get any better, and then it does.

"Thanks," she mumbles into his shoulder. "You're the best boyfriend ever."

His heart swoops and he unconsciously hugs her even tighter.

"Well, you're the – "

"If you say best girlfriend ever," she interrupts him, "I'll throw up."

"Fine, then," he huffs. "You're the best skateboarder ever. Happy?"

"Yes," she says, and he can hear that she means it, and that makes him happy, too.

They stand there, holding onto each other, for another few minutes, and then she pulls away, wiping her eyes and betting him that she can get to his house faster than he can. (Winner gets to pick the movie.)

He lets her win, and she knows it.

Neither of them care.

Author's Note:

I love them so much.

Also, bonus points to whoever noticed the SUPER tiny nod to The Breakfast Club.

I hope you liked it!!!

Have a wonderful day!!!